

H.R. 1738 Accessible, Affordable Internet for All Act

Summary

Investment in Universal Broadband Access

- *Nationwide High-Speed Internet for All* – Authorizes \$80 billion to deploy secure and resilient broadband infrastructure for communities nationwide, connecting unserved and underserved rural, suburban, and urban areas across the country with high-speed internet service while prioritizing unserved and persistent poverty communities.
- *Low-Interest Financing for Broadband Deployment* – Authorizes \$5 billion over five years for low-interest financing of broadband deployment through a new program that would allow eligible entities to apply for secured loans, lines of credit, or loan guarantees to finance broadband infrastructure build out projects.
- *Dig Once* – Creates a new “dig once” provision to ensure better coordination of transportation and broadband infrastructure projects, while ensuring State flexibility and preventing unfunded mandates.
- *Invest Federal Funds Efficiently and Effectively* – Authorizes funding for the new Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, responsible for coordinating with other federal agencies to ensure efficient use of federal money, streamlining the application processes for broadband funding programs, and ensuring that broadband-related support is being administered in an efficient and financially sustainable manner by tracking all federal money used for construction and use of broadband infrastructure.

Ensure Internet Affordability

- *Affordable Option* – Requires internet service providers whose networks are built with the new \$80 billion support appropriated in the bill to offer an affordable service plan to every consumer.
- *Emergency Broadband Benefit* – Authorizes an additional \$6 billion for the recently established Emergency Broadband Benefit, which provides a \$50 monthly discount on the internet plans for low-income Americans anywhere in the country, or \$75 for consumers on tribal lands.
- *Protects Local Options* – Guarantees the right of local governments, public-private partnerships, and cooperatives to deliver broadband service, which has lowered prices in many communities by providing competition to traditional broadband providers.

- *Promotes Competition* – Gives preference in the funds provided under the bill to broadband projects that will provide open access for additional providers to use taxpayer-funded infrastructure on fair terms to provide more options to consumers
- *Pricing Data* – Directs the Federal Communications Commission to collect data on prices charged for broadband service throughout the country and make that data widely available to other Federal agencies, researchers, and public interest groups, with appropriate privacy protections.
- *Affordability Study* – Directs the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth to conduct a study on a biennial basis to measure the extent to which cost remains a barrier to broadband adoption and the feasibility of providing additional targeted federal subsidies to offset costs for low-income households.

Promotes Internet Adoption

- *Broadband Adoption and Digital Skills* – Authorizes over \$1 billion to establish two new grant programs: the State Digital Equity Capacity Program, an annual grant program for states to create and implement comprehensive digital equity plans to help close gaps in broadband adoption and digital skills, and the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program, which will further support these efforts through digital inclusion projects undertaken by individual organizations and local communities.
- *Home Internet for Students or Mobile Hotspots* – Authorizes an additional \$2 billion for the recently enacted Emergency Connectivity Fund through E-Rate to promote student connectivity.
- *School Buses* – Authorizes funding for Wi-Fi on school buses so that students can be connected, especially in rural areas where long bus rides are common.